

Make Healthy Choices the Easy Choice: Food standards

Why Food Standards Matter

While individuals make choices about their diet, **our decisions and eating habits are influenced by the food that is available around us**, including at our worksite and places we frequent. **Food standards** are guidelines or policies adopted by an organization which mandate where the food is purchased from, how it is prepared, presented, priced, and/or marketed. By revising food standards, organizations can **increase access to healthy, affordable foods**. Almost any organization or entity can improve its food standards. Think about how often you are in a place that serves, sells, or distributes food and beverages!

Settings which could adopt or update a food standard include:

- Municipalities and agencies (e.g., Parks and Recreation)
- Worksites
- Hospitals
- Community-based organizations
- Colleges and universities
- Libraries
- Schools and associated programming (e.g., after school)

Food standards might refer to food sold or served in:

- Cafeterias/cafés
- Meetings, events, and conferences
- Vending machines
- Snack bars, concession stands



Implementing Food Standards

Some standards can be changed fairly easily – for example, an employer could adopt a healthy meeting policy and require caterers to comply with the policy when ordering food for meetings, events, and conferences. Other changes might require more effort – for example, a large hospital might update its food service contractor requirements (or bid specifications) with new nutritional criteria.

Regardless, these **changes can greatly influence the food we're surrounded by**, helping us to more easily find and choose alternatives that support health.

Standards can influence...	Sample Policy
Pricing	Require sandwiches be available in half-size portions at half the price of a full-size sandwich
Sourcing/Purchasing	Give preference to local sources of food
Preparation	No deep frying
Serving	Require at least 50% of all sandwiches offered be made or served with whole grain
Placement	Require low calorie drinks be placed at eye level
Labeling	Require calorie information posted for items that do not include a Nutrition Facts label
Promotion/Marketing	Require advertising or promotional materials only be for healthy food and beverage options

Take action! Advocate for healthier food standards at your worksite or places you frequent today.
Wellness champions like you make it happen!